Naheed Khan's interim bail extended

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE, Dec 31: The Lahore High Court on Thursday adjourned the hearing of the bail plea of Ms Naheed Khan, opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's political secretary, till Jan 25, 1999, and extended the interim bail granted to her on Tuesday till that date.

Assistant Advocate-General Husain Nawaz Bhatti informed the bench comprising Justices Khalilur Rahman Ramday and Zafar Pasha Chaudhry that offences under the Anti-Terrorist Act have been added to the FIR against Ms Khan for obstructing government servants in the performance of their duty which make the case against her non-bailable.

Advocate Raja Muhammad Anwar, the petitioner's counsel, submitted that Ms Khan was booked for defamation and intimidation and not for attempting to obstruct anybody from performing his duties. There is a separate provision for such obstruction under the PPC but the offence has not been mentioned in the schedule to the Anti-Terrorist Act. The offence is not triable under the ATA and the case remains bailable.

"What can be bigger obstruction than blackening the face of an official attending the court to record his evidence", remarked Justice Ramday.

Raja Anwar said the only role attributed to Ms Khan was that she allegedly asked Punjab PPP vice-president Raja Ashraf Pervaiz to 'take care' of Ehtesab Bureau official Sami Khilji. She never uttered these words and had nothing to do with a subsequent altercation between Raja Ashraf and the official.

Justice Zafar Pasha referred to certain amendments made in the ATA and the bench decided to adjourn the hearing till Jan 25, 1999.

Advocate Munir Ahmad Khan informed the court that about 18 people have been arrested by police in the high court without assigning any reason. An assistant commissioner rejoined that the arrests were made at the outer gate of the LHC building. The detenus were coming in a procession and the police suspected that they would create trouble in the high court.

Justice Ramday asked the AC to release the detenus if there was nothing serious against them.